United Nations A/54/72

General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 March 1999
English
Original: Russian

Fifty-fourth session
Item 76 of the preliminary list*
General and complete disarmament

Letter dated 12 March 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement of 10 March 1999 by the official representative of the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the question of adapting the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of this letter and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the agenda item entitled "General and complete disarmament".

(*Signed*) S. **Lavrov**

* A/54/50.

99-07071 (E) 160399 160399

Annex

Statement of 10 March 1999 by the official representative of the Russian Federation Ministry of Foreign Affairs

During the extensive consultation held in Brussels between the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), agreement was reached on settling the key problems of adapting the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) by no later than the end of this month. On this basis, the representatives of NATO and the Russian Federation at the Vienna negotiations made, on 9 March 1999, official statements reaffirming their readiness to draw up and adopt within the period specified, together with the other States parties, a document establishing mutually acceptable parameters for such adaptation. The document, in particular, should reflect the agreed approaches to the problems of flank limitations and the strengthening of stability in Central Europe. These questions are fundamental for European security in light of the forthcoming NATO expansion.

The Russian side welcomes the positive movement in the position held by the Alliance's members, which demonstrates their desire to ensure the conditions for successfully completing the process of adapting this document by the Istanbul summit meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It is counting on the support of all States parties for this course of action and their understanding of the importance of the time factor for the Russian Federation. In insisting on the timely settlement of the problems of adapting the CFE Treaty with account taken of the dates for NATO expansion, we are guided by a single approach to the relationship on the part of our society and the legislative and executive authorities with the Alliance.

The CFE Treaty is the foundation of European security. Maintaining and strengthening it is a most important task, which, in order to be carried out, requires, as a minimum, protecting this unique Treaty from inevitable conflict with the new military-political situation on the continent if the negotiations are delayed any further.